



News & views

October 2008

Staff Consultative Council special



Staff Consultative Council

One year on

BY CHERYL EDWARDES, MANAGER, INFORMATION SYSTEMS GROUP

The SCC has been pleased to represent staff for the last year and is looking forward to continuing its work in the year ahead. In this special, we wanted to take



the opportunity to update you on our activity and encourage you all to share your thoughts on what the SCC might investigate further in the year ahead to support management decisions and policies that affect all staff, for the benefit of all.

Putting down roots

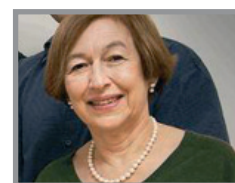
BY ANNE LAPPING, CHAIR, SCC

I am delighted to report that LSE's Staff Consultative Council has now established strong roots. We have spent time in our first year working out procedures to enable us to fulfil our remit to identify and be consulted on trends and developments in the School that impact on the working environment.

LSE's consultative council is an innovation in the Higher Education sector, but we are now able to review policy systematically across the School's array of committees. We are grateful for their response and we appreciate the willingness of departments to give us personal briefings.

Getting to this stage has taken hard thought and work. The value of the commitment of council members, the training they have volunteered for and their understanding of developing issues cannot be overestimated.

The most important fact about the SCC is that it is for the staff. Its influence depends on staff support – the more it gets the greater its ability to represent accurately the views of staff to management and the Council of Governors of the School.



We hope all staff will keep viewing our web pages which carry summaries of SCC discussions and minutes of meetings. The response we have had so far from every element in the school confirms my belief in the value of the SCC as a consultative forum reflecting staff opinion, informing management decision making and influencing the development of the school to the advantage of the whole community.

New member

Nat Holtham (pictured right),

Office of Development and Alumni Relations

I've worked at the School since 2001 and have had a variety of roles within the Alumni Relations team.

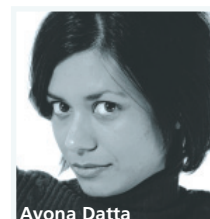
I enjoy liaising with colleagues in departments around the School, both academic and administrative, and find LSE a fascinating (and occasionally frustrating) place to work.

My current role as deputy head of alumni relations includes responsibility for fostering ongoing links between alumni and the School, primarily via Students' Union societies and academic departments.

SCC members



John Kent



Ayona Datta



Mark Atkinson



Fran Ward



Joanne Taplin-Green



Mike Bragg

COMMUNICATION

The SCC communications committee has been hard at work developing ways to let you know why we're here and what we've been doing.

In May we met with creative facilitator, Alastair Creamer of Creamer and Lloyd, and following a great session, settled on a logo, slogan and branding. You may have seen these at our stall at the Street Fayre.

The newly developed SSC website keeps you up to date with our latest news and summaries of meetings. Want to know who we are and why we are on the council? You'll find details of all 18 members at: www.lse.ac.uk/scc

We've been developing ways of helping you contact us so we've set up an email address: scc@lse.ac.uk and arranged for your comments to be sent anonymously through the internal post. Simply pop your comments in an internal envelope and mark it 'for SCC Views'.

coming soon: secure drop boxes in staff areas – making it even easier for you to tell us what you think.

Learning at Work Day

BY MIKE BRAGG

This summer, the SCC had a stall at the annual Street Fayre which helped to raise awareness of the SCC. Although we have featured in electronic circulars and *News&Views*, and discussed at a number of the Staff Briefings, we felt it was important to present an approachable human face and attempt to plug the gaps mass communication can miss. It was also a valuable exercise in making us focus on what it was we actually wanted to say. With a prime location and selection of edible incentives, a number of our members staffed the stall. The fundamental message was that we were here, we were listening and, most importantly the key to SCC's existence, staff opinions matter to the School. We are all members of LSE and we all have our interests and concerns. The most rewarding part of the day was reading the comments posted into the suggestions box set up at the stall. In one leap, we had come from a

handful of messages sent to the email address to 60 brand new observations, and suggestions. This was an ideal way for staff to engage with us in a way

that face to face or electronic communication had not yet managed. Confidentiality does not allow us to divulge exactly what they were, but each and every one was important to us. Not only were they a massive boost to our morale, they helped build an understanding of what we need to do in the future. I hope that, if we run a stall next year, by then our message will be familiar: we are here and your opinions matter. Please don't make us wear comedy ears again.



Building on strengths

The SCC has met regularly and its members have received training on how they can best work together as a representative body. Below is a summary of those meetings

2007	13 May	9 July
28 June	Planning session for the Street Fayre and SCC 'branding'	Planning session reviewing the workings of the SCC and preparing for 2008/09
29 October	22 May	
Meeting	Street Fayre	
19 and 20 November	30 May	14 August
Staff briefings	Meeting	Development session focussed on the governance of LSE
2008	20 June	
13 February	Meeting	

As well as specific meetings, members have been getting together on an informal basis to discuss current issues, ensure the smooth running of the SCC and to work on specific projects such as the website.

More SCC members



CALLING ALL COMMITTEES

If you have any items that would benefit from being discussed by the SCC, particularly if decisions affecting staff are being made, we would like to hear from you.

The SCC meets regularly in term time with meetings in the coming year currently scheduled for Thursdays on 16 October, 8 December, 22 January, 26 March, 30 April and 25 June.

What we can do for you...

The SCC exists to improve the 'working environment' for all LSE staff. In the first year work and discussions have included:

- work-life balance
- concerns over staff harassment from students
- arrangements for the LSE staff counselling service
- conditions of part-time and hourly paid staff, in particular graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs)

We have received reports from Health and Safety, HR, and Estates and in turn have provided updates to Council.

Not surprisingly, our first year has partly been about finding our feet and establishing ways of working, and we have focused particularly on developing channels of communication to reach all staff. This has included working with IT Services to make computer access, including email, more readily available for staff who don't already have it. In the next year, we will continue to work on the issues highlighted above as well as on other areas of concern which staff have flagged in the most recent survey and in our comments box. These include:

- internal communication
- consistency of employment conditions across departments
- our physical working environment

In order to keep our focus on the areas that matter, it is important we hear from you. If you have anything you'd like to raise, please don't hesitate to get in touch, either by email at: scc@lse.ac.uk or internal mail to: SCC Views. However, please remember that we act for staff as a whole and cannot intervene regarding individual grievances or problems. These should be raised with a manager, the unions or elsewhere.

Please see the 'Related links' at: www.lse.ac.uk/scc